



# Employee UPDATE

*Our Mission: To serve the people of North Carolina by enabling individuals, families and communities to be healthy and secure, and to achieve social and economic well-being.*

A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

## New central region hospital director appointed

RALEIGH – Patsy Christian, director of John Umstead Hospital since 1993, has been named as the director of the Central Region Psychiatric Hospital now under construction in Butner. Director of the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Service Mike Moseley announced the appointment earlier this month.

“We need a special person with the right skills, abilities and temperament to manage the development, staffing and eventual opening of North Carolina’s first new psychiatric hospital in nearly 100 years. We have that person in Dr. Patsy Christian,” Moseley said. “Her career has included everything from working the third shift as a charge nurse to her last 12 years as director of John Umstead Hospital. She understands the needs of line workers because she’s been one, and she has a demonstrated ability to operate and manage a publicly funded hospital. She is absolutely committed to ensuring that the new hospital



Patsy Christian

provides high quality psychiatric care and a strong, cohesive, nurturing working environment.”

“It was with sadness and delight that I accepted this position,” Christian said. “Sadness because of the future closure of two psychiatric hospitals that have provided excellent mental health care to the citizens of this state for a very long time, and delight because of the endless possibilities generated by merging the staffs of Dix and Umstead to create a new hospital with its yet to be developed culture and identity. By combining the strengths of each hospital, we can only end up with an outstanding organization, committed to providing outstanding mental health care.”

Christian assumed her new duties September 1 and is currently working out of the division office in Raleigh coordinating joint planning activities associated with the new hospital, Moseley said. He also announced that Chief of State Operated Services Mike Hennike will provide management coverage for John Umstead Hospital until an interim hospital director is appointed.

Moseley has also appointed Dr. Jim Osberg as the new director of Dorothea Dix Hospital to replace Dr. Terry Stelle who is retiring as Hospital director on

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# Cutting-Edge Concept Culminates in NC Clinical Lab Tech Day

By Lisa O. Ballance, BSMT (ASCP)  
Laboratory Improvement Consultant

On August 5, the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health

proudly introduced a cutting-edge concept in the delivery of high quality, clinical laboratory continuing education. *North Carolina Clinical Lab Tech Day*, a one-day educational conference targeted to a broad spectrum of healthcare professionals, phlebotomists, educators, and students, was hosted on the campus of Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh. This inaugural event, which was the creation of the Laboratory Improvement Unit of the State Laboratory of Public Health in the Division of Public Health, received national pre- and post-event exposure through *Medical Laboratory Observer*, a professional laboratory magazine with a readership of more than 49,000, as well as from its co-sponsorship with the National Laboratory Training Network.

This educational forum drew attendees from five states, including representatives from both public health and private sector healthcare facilities as well as multiple educational institutions and

organizations. Welcoming this year's attendees were Dr. Leslie A. Wolf, acting director of the State Laboratory of Public Health, and Dr.

presentations by William Patrakis, RS, MA, from the Division of Waste Management and Steven Preissler, MS, occupational health specialist with the Department of Labor's Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

In addition to dynamic educational sessions by knowledgeable speakers, this conference also featured a variety of vendor and educational exhibits. During the course of the day, participants visited the 16



The Laboratory Improvement staff takes a moment to pose alongside the CLTD sponsor board.

Stephen C. Scott, president of Wake Technical Community College.

With approximately 250 participants and exhibitors in attendance, this conference featured four presentations, including two sessions by internationally acclaimed phlebotomy expert and author, Dennis J. Ernst, MT (ASCP).

Complimenting the phlebotomy theme of this year's conference were safety



Kristy Osterhout (L) and Dr. Leslie Wolf (R), pose with featured presenter, Dennis J. Ernst.

display areas to interact with exhibitors and evaluate their products and services.

## Lab Day, continued from page 2



Participants take a moment to enjoy refreshments and interact with vendors.

The day's events concluded with door prize drawings made possible by the generous support of the event's 19 sponsors and exhibitors. With more than 50 items awarded, recipients took away an abundance of prizes and educational materials. ■

## Rowe-West recognized with Bernstein Award

Congratulations are in order, as Beth Rowe-West, R.N., B.S.N. and Immunization Branch Head in the Division of Public Health's Women's and Children's Health Section, was recently named the recipient of the North Carolina Pediatric Society's James D. Bernstein Excellence in Public Service for Children Award.

"We are very pleased that Beth has received this very special recognition by one of our most important partners. We are grateful for Beth, her leadership and commitment to public health," said State Health Director Dr. Leah Devlin. "Immunizations are the bedrock of prevention and one of the most critical strategies to prevent death and disability in children and adults. There also continue to be tremendous challenges that we must meet to continue to strengthen our efforts in this regard. We are very, very fortunate to have Beth at the helm as she consistently rises to these challenges time and again



Beth Rowe-West

with her leadership, expertise and plain old hard work!"

The award was established in 1992 to recognize excellence in public service by an individual in state government who has worked to improve the health and well-being of all of North Carolina's children. The late Dr. Bernstein, for whom the award

was recently renamed, directed North Carolina's nationally renowned Office of Rural Health Services for over 30 years.

Rowe-West was honored on August 20, for her distinguished career of nursing and public health administration. She received the award at the NC Pediatric Society's annual conference in Asheville.

A native of Wilson County, Rowe-West graduated from the UNC-Greensboro School of Nursing and worked at Thomasville's Community General Hospital and the Davidson County Health Department before moving to the state's immunization branch in 1994. She has been head of the immunization branch since 1998. ■





## Jalil Isa

# *¡Salud y Saludos!*

One of the state's largest Latino festivals is right around the corner. *La Fiesta del Pueblo* is taking place this year at the state fairgrounds during the weekend of September 10-11. If you've never heard of this event, take note that it has grown every year—starting in 1994 when about 2,000 attended to the roughly 60,000 who visited last year. The event is put together by the Raleigh-based Hispanic advocacy organization 'El Pueblo.' But the event wouldn't be possible without the help of more than 600 volunteers who work on everything from posting signs to directing visitors around the grounds.

This event draws people from all sectors of the state...in large part thanks to the diversity of exhibits, vendors and available resources. Not only will you find all kinds of foods from Latin America and the Caribbean—from Jamaican to Mexican—you'll also see businesses ready to market their products to everyone attending. In addition, you'll learn about the latest work area non-profits are engaged in. Looking for work? Expect to find a host of companies looking for the most competent bilingual workers they can get their hands on. And along with the job fair, you'll also find a health fair section where patrons can come and learn about ways to improve their health. Various agencies involved in health care will be on-hand distributing their information.

Anywhere you go it will be hard to escape the sounds of the festival. Music is, and always will be, an integral part of any Latino festival. Various bands will be striking their notes on more than one stage. Dancing to the chords will be several members of the community including high-profile dignitaries who are now well aware of this event's exposure and the unique opportunities afforded to strike a chord with the audience.

For me, the event represents an opportunity to pass along vital information to the public about all manners of resources that are out there. Furthermore, as many who either know me personally or have read enough of these columns know, the food, the food, and the food is one of the main reasons I'm there! Several years ago when I first attended, I had the chance to taste a wonderful drink made out of milk and rice called '*Agua de Horchata*.' It's delicious! You can find it in *some* Mexican restaurants. I highly recommend this simple but tasty beverage that you might not have, otherwise, ever heard of! (Once again proving that you can grow up in a very Hispanic environment, like I did in Miami, but yet be unaware of some of the wonderful foods of other Latino cultures—this beverage is primarily a Mexican creation) There's also the interesting cactus-related plant called the *Nopal*. Given the dry, desert-like

conditions of much of Mexico, this plant grows easily there and is believed to have been one of the first foods for nomads in the area more than 10,000 years ago. The plant also blooms the prickly pear—another tasty product of this prickly plant. The *Nopal* can even be found on the Mexican flag. Long story short, I didn't think I'd ever be eating cactus at a festival like this...but it happened!

If you have kids and are wondering whether this is a family-friendly event, rest assured. The *Niñolandia* area will be just what the children are looking for. An area full of games and that inflatable jumping thing that kids (well, ok, and sometimes adults too) love so much! So there will be plenty to keep them busy.

Perhaps best of all, this event which is one of the best in the state showcasing Latino culture and full of fun for the entire family comes at a small price: \$2 per adult; kids are free. I'll be there both days! ■

# New school standards seek to increase kids' physical activity

A new set of guidelines to improve children's health, "Move More: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for Physical Activity in School," was released August 26 at Carroll Middle School in Raleigh. The document is the result of a cooperative effort of the N.C. Division of Public Health, N.C. Department of Public Instruction, N.C. Healthy Schools, and N.C. Cooperative Extension Service.

The "Move More" standards are a companion to the "Eat Smart School Standards" released in May 2004. Together, the guidelines seek to combat childhood obesity, establish healthy activity and eating patterns in children, and improve children's health and well-being.

Students need both physical activity throughout the day and physical education classes to adopt and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. The "Move More School Standards" defines standards for each and provides recommendations on ways students, families, principals, teachers, school staff, school board members, superintendents and community leaders can make school a place that supports and

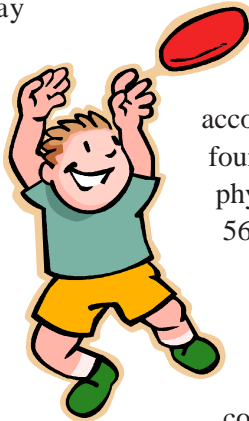
encourages physical activity and physical education.

North Carolina, like the rest of the nation, is experiencing an epidemic of childhood obesity. Between 1995 and 2004, the prevalence of overweight in North Carolina's children increased 65.3 percent in 2- to 4-year-olds, 62.2 percent in 5- to 11-year-olds and 19.8 percent in 12- to 18-year-olds. The primary causes of premature death and disability among North Carolinians — heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes — are directly linked to poor food choices and sedentary lifestyles, which also cause obesity. Building good activity and nutrition habits in childhood can lead to healthier lifestyles—and reduced risk of chronic diseases—later in life.

Children of all ages need from 60 minutes to several hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day, and they need to avoid prolonged periods of inactivity. But only about half of North Carolina middle school children get at least 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity and only one-fourth get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week, according to the state's 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The survey also found that only 47 percent of North Carolina high school students attended a physical education class at least one day per week. The national average is 56 percent.

"Increased physical activity in school benefits students, the school and the community by improving academic performance as well as reducing the risk for excess weight gain and other chronic health conditions that can affect them for the rest of their lives," said Dr. Leah Devlin, State Health Director.

The "Move More School Standards" and the companion "Eat Smart School Standards" are posted on the Web at [www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com](http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com), [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org) and [www.nchealthyschools.org](http://www.nchealthyschools.org). ■



# Triple play exercise to be on Rand website

Late last year, when the federal Department of Health and Human Services asked states across the country to participate in a project evaluating the design of public health preparedness exercises, the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response (PHP&R) knew exactly what it wanted to submit – Triple Play.

Triple Play, which took months to design and was carried out over a three-month period in 2003, was recently selected by the RAND Corporation – the company selected by DHHS to evaluate the exercises – as a showcase example on its web site for others to follow. Although still in development and not yet accessible, RAND officials notified PHP&R in August that Triple Play will be featured in a new section of its website that will serve as a clearinghouse for drills, orientations, tabletop exercises, functional exercises and full-scale exercises previously conducted across the country. The website will also include other resources developed by RAND as part of its contract with the federal Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Health Emergency Preparedness.

Triple Play was a three-part bioterrorism preparedness field and tabletop exercise held in October, November, and December of 2003.



SNS Push Package.

The first phase of the exercise focused on detecting a disease outbreak, investigating and identifying the disease agent, and requesting federal resources. The second two phases focused on receiving and distributing medical supplies from Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Push

Packages and developing protocols for isolation and quarantine. Several North Carolina local health departments and state agencies participated in the exercise, including DHHS, the Division of Emergency Management (NCEM), and the Department of Agriculture and

Consumer Services (DA&CS). The event provided an important training opportunity for agency staff members and helped test the state's emergency plans and tools.

## The three main goals defined for the exercise were:

1. Involve as many levels of government and organization as possible.
2. Exercise with maximum realism and minimum artificiality.
3. Identify weaknesses in planning, training, and organization.

Triple Play, however, isn't the first North Carolina public health preparedness effort to be recognized

by the RAND Corporation. In April, RAND – which describes itself as the world's most trusted source of objective health policy research – recognized North Carolina's creation and develop of Public Health Regional Surveillance Teams (PHRSTs) to facilitate local public health preparedness and response as an exemplary practice.



Warehouse staff at an SNS Reception and Staging Site prepare shipments.

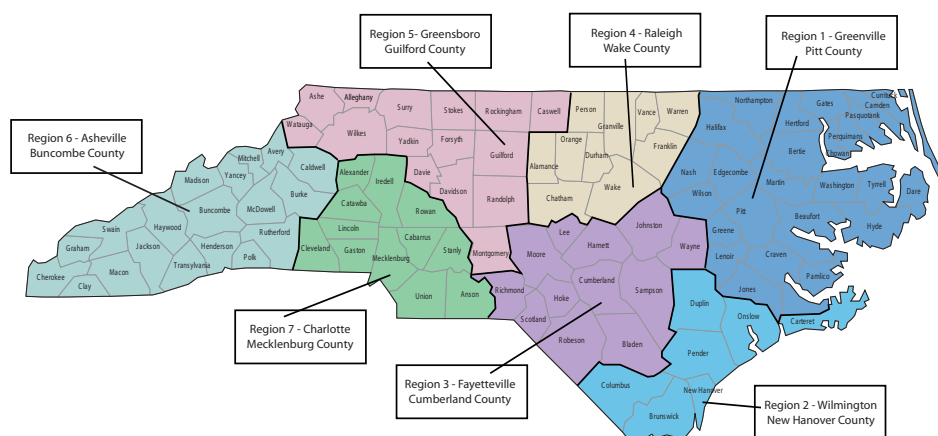
In making such a determination RAND examined threats to public health ranging from the immediate (e.g., infectious diseases crossing our borders) to the longer term (e.g., the future health consequences of today's obesity epidemic); and investigated a wide range of issues that could significantly affect our nation's health, now and in the future.

According to RAND, PHRSTs are deemed to be an exemplary practice because they provide numerous and valuable public health capabilities. Specifically, they:

- ▲ Provide an innovative on-call consultancy to enhance local outbreak readiness,
- ▲ Build the capacity for public health surveillance by coordinating epidemiologic response activities and providing

resources to county health departments within their region for disease detection, and

- ▲ The specifications for team composition provide a framework that can be easily replicated.



Everyone in the North Carolina's public health system—especially the professionals who comprise the PHRSTs—are very honored by this recognition. ■



October is nationally recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Susan S. King, violence prevention coordinator with the Social Services is leading the Silent Witness as a public education in the North Carolina against Domestic Violence. Come to remind citizens of the price we pay the effects of domestic says Ms. King.

## ***Domestic Violence Awareness Month: It IS Your Business***

In 2004, 61 women, 19 men, and three children were murdered. A domestic violence-related homicide is defined as when an abusive intimate partner murders: a current or former intimate partner and/or the children or relatives of the current/former partner, their own relatives, a person trying to protect their current/former intimate partner, or a current intimate partner of the abuser's ex-partner.

There will be a display of Silent Witnesses at several DHHS office locations during the week of October 3-7, 2005. These red silhouettes commemorate the lives of North

Carolínians who lost their lives because of domestic violence. Each silhouette represents a person whose life was taken by a trusted partner or family member.

Contact your local domestic violence agency regarding events scheduled in your area that recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Be sure to wear a purple ribbon during October to honor victims and survivors of domestic violence. ■



# Harrington received national recognition

Dennis Harrington, deputy director, Division of Public Health (DPH) has received the National Association of Local Boards of Health's 2005 Director's Award. The award was presented at the association's 13th Annual Conference held August 10-13, in Nashville, Tenn.

"Many of you experience Dennis' leadership and hard work through his administrative role for the division and in his work between the division and the department," said State Health Director Dr. Leah Devlin. "What you may not know as well is how strong a role he plays in assisting the local boards of health in their policy development, in the selection of the local health directors and in training and orientation. Because of his own experience at the local level and his wide knowledge of the counties, Dennis is a tremendous asset to us and to our local public health partners."

Dennis travels extensively in the evenings to meet with the boards of health and the local health directors. I have never heard him decline a request no matter how far or how inconvenient it may be to him personally."

Harrington served for 13 years as a local health director in Davie and Scotland counties prior to joining DPH in 2003.

The Directors Award is given to a current state or local health official who has:

- ▲ contributed significantly to state or local public health; or
- ▲ contributed to the training, support and strength of a local board of health or state association of local boards of health.

"It is very good to see Dennis recognized by this national association for his very valuable contributions to the local boards of health in North Carolina," said Dr. Devlin.

"Given that there are over 800 professional and community volunteers serving on these local boards, it is critical that we provide them with the support that they deserve as public health leaders and policy makers. No one does this better than Dennis Harrington." ■



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## SECC

School has started. The leaves will soon turn. And, the days are getting shorter. This is also combined campaign season. If you haven't been contacted already, you will soon be contacted about the State Employee's Combined Campaign, which is your only opportunity for workplace charitable giving.

In its 21<sup>st</sup> year, the campaign is working to raise a record \$5 million to benefit charities across the state. Virtually all employees – including temporaries, interns and contractors – can participate in the campaign.

Participating is easy. If you have questions, you can go to the campaign web site at <http://www.ncsecc.org>.



# Mentoring comes to DHHS

DHHS is piloting a mentoring program designed for women and starting in the Divisions of Social Services and Public Health.

The program will open to other DHHS female employees in June of 2006.

The goals of the mentoring program are to increase recruitment, retention, training, and improvement in the work environment for women, including:

- ▲ To assist these employees in developing a strategy for career development to increase knowledge, skills, and competencies;
- ▲ To increase the recognition of achievement of females; and
- ▲ To provide a resource to ensure opportunities are open to female employees and provide access to available information and resources to advance their careers in state government.

The mentoring program was created in response to results obtained from

the Special Emphasis Project (SEP), conducted by the Office of State Personnel. The SEP was established to ensure that the state lives up to its responsibility to its employees to provide equitable compensation and a work environment free from discrimination.



OSP embarked upon the SEP in 1999. The SEP was designed to ensure a work environment in which all are treated in a fair and equitable manner. The initial focus of the SEP was on African American males and a report of results was presented to the Governor's Office in May 2004. The most recent group focus under the SEP was females.

The initial meeting was held July 29 with a group of mentors and mentees. Special

speakers including Kathy Gruer, DHHS HR director, Pheon Beal, Social Services division director, and directors Charlene Shabazz and Bonnie Tripp Simmons were invited to kick off the program.

Mentees will have one-on-one sessions with their mentor and attend professional meetings with their mentor to network with people who can assist with their career development. Mentees have created career goals to discuss with their mentors for their initial meeting and have updated their resumes for their mentors to critique.

Mentors will learn new skills in coaching, giving feedback and active listening in a non-supervisory capacity. They will meet quarterly with each other to network and discuss their mentee's progress.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor or mentee, please contact Lori Millette, project coordinator, at [Lori.Millette@ncmail.net](mailto:Lori.Millette@ncmail.net), or call 919-733-2940. Training is provided. ■

## New software licensing agreement gives GIS users better tools

Unlimited quantities of up-to-date geographic information systems (GIS) software products will be available to state agencies, including DHHS, through a new Enterprise License Agreement (ELA) with the GIS software company ESRI. The Office of Information Technology Services approved the agreement, which directly benefits both state government GIS users and taxpayers.

The agreement will provide substantial cost reductions for software, training, support and other services, as well as savings in procurement and administrative costs. It will also help ensure GIS software compatibility across agencies and immediate access to software upgrades.

“The availability of ESRI software to North Carolina state agencies will be a tremendous benefit,” said Dianne Enright, health and spatial analysis unit manager, State Center for Health Statistics. “By allowing agencies access to the latest releases of GIS software, more interagency projects can be developed. Now we can use this technology throughout state government and possibly create uses never seen before.”

By layering information on maps, GIS can create a picture that helps people understand data more easily. For example, GIS software can create a series of maps showing the spread of a disease such as rabies over a 10-year period. Or it might map out high-poverty areas and the location of certain services such as free health clinics or WIC providers to see if people can access the services they need.

North Carolina applies GIS in a number of areas including public health, disaster preparedness, economic development, homeland security, and transportation. ■

### Christian, continued from page 1



**Steady Progress** – The first reinforced concrete walls have been poured and the first wall of the new Central Region Psychiatric Hospital rises slowly from the soil of the Butner site. This small glimpse of the construction area is designated to house clinics and labs as well as the school for the adolescent treatment program. (photo by DHHS Property and Construction staff)

September 30. Dr. Osberg, the current interim director at Cherry Hospital, will assume his new duties on October 1.

“Dr. Osberg is a man of many talents and has worn a number of professional hats within the Division

September 30. Dr. Osberg, the current interim director at Cherry Hospital, will assume his new duties on October 1.

“Dr. Osberg is a man of many talents and has worn a number of professional hats

within the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services,” Moseley said. “Prior to his current stint at Cherry Hospital, he served for five years as team leader within the division’s State Operated Services Section which provides state-level oversight to the four state psychiatric hospitals. We are very glad to have this strong and able administrator pick up the reins at Dix Hospital during the transition period.” ■

# Adoption Profile

## Introducing Nicholas...

Nicholas is a bashful, yet sociable, young man who gets along well with everyone. He is very amusing and likes being the class clown. Nicholas loves to travel, ride his bike, swim, play basketball and jump on the trampoline. He enjoys being very helpful around the house and his charming personality attracts everyone.

Nicholas is on an occupational track at school where his workload and level make success possible. Nicholas loves the social aspect of school and sometimes requires reinforcement to stay on task and complete assignments. Nicholas needs to learn to be more protective of himself, physically, and understand the consequences of his actions when he is not careful.



Nicholas  
b. Nov.20, 1988

## A Family for Nicholas... "

An adoptive family for Nicholas will need to receive training regarding the effects and treatment of Nicholas's medical conditions. They will need to be loving, honest, patient and provide a structured environment. They will also need to see that all academic services are in place and reinforce the importance of education with him. (NC #082-2190) For more information on this child or adoption and foster care, in general, call NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network toll free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 (1-877-625-4371).